

VISIONS and GOALS

Havre de Grace inhabits a setting that is enviable in its small-town charm and its outdoor connections to a vast waterfront like nowhere else in the region. The City is situated at the very top of the Chesapeake where the Susquehanna River broadens to become the Bay, with parks and protected lands along both ends of our waterfront boundaries. This makes for a unique location based in its historic water access – when waterways were highways – and as a significant point of overland road and rail transportation that developed along the eastern seaboard. Despite all this, it has stayed at a scale that is very human and personal.

In addition and like many places, Havre de Grace at its heart is a community of citizens who care for each other. The spirit of volunteerism runs strong and we keep developing creative outlets to satisfy this natural instinct, whether it be through the community Thanksgiving dinner established over thirty years ago or the annual Candlelight Tour having passed its fiftieth year or the CAT (Citizens Against Trash) Club weekly cleanups. People reaching, helping – it's in our nature.

It's these two things – its people and time-honored places – that make Havre de Grace unique and provide the foundation that will have the City reach its greatest potential for those involved, whether it is as a place you call home, where you choose to locate your business, or as a desired destination based on its intrinsic appeal. These are aspects of Havre de Grace that we wish to grow. With this in mind, the following visions are outlined to guide the continuing revitalization and development of the City of Havre de Grace.

VISIONS FOR THE CITY OF HAVRE DE GRACE:

Healthy community

Trails, parks, waterfront, year-round outdoor focus – preventative health, good living

Safe, policing and community policing, mutual aid and support, mental health

A community of neighborhoods, neighbors looking out for each other

Community amenities, like the Activity Center (senior support), recreational facilities and opportunities for kids and people of all ages, preventative physical activity options. Walkable schools, especially the centrally located new Middle-High School

Water connections – open sky, natural world – natural connections, gateway to the Bay, water sports active recreation and leisure (fishing, wading, and strolling)

Relationship to UM HHM, UM Aberdeen FMF – advocate for full service hospital to serve communities in proximity to US 40 and I-95 population centers, development envelope concentration/population concentration/highway access. Loss is huge, not just HHM, but acute-care hospital support

Inclusive community

Recognition of its historic diversity, place of work, industry, hard-fought educational facilities (HdG Colored School Foundation) – first high school for African-American in HC, graduating its first class in 1932 (HS building completed in 1936). Integrated community, albeit not in the schools in Harford County until 1965

Need to do better for inclusivity and engagement within the public realm.

Housing (options, support, and choice); need to focus on building in affordable housing and recognizing needs with an equity lens

Support for diverse businesses, minority-owned business (Minority Business Enterprise, MBE) – ethnic minority, gender, and/or military veteran classifications

Affordability vs. gentrification as an issue; displacement due to rising values/prices

Vibrant, connected community

Reimagined Route 40 as a connecting corridor

MARC, MTA, HarfordLINK – Northeast Corridor (NEC) Amtrak Rail access

ECG, 9-11 National Memorial Trail, LSHG trail connections, MDOT Bike Spine Network

Innovation, at-home businesses, incubators, small-scale manufacturing that doesn't need to be housed in industrial complexes. Post-COVID evolution of business and remote work. Need to ensure we have the communications bandwidth and infrastructure in place for at-home innovation

Support and grow businesses in the City

Downtown as quaint and beautiful commercial center of activity

What does the interchange want to be? Relationship to the region, Great Wolf Lodge, evolution of what the Lower Sus/Upper Bay can be from an economic development standpoint

Essential cultural and historic hub

Arts focused, round out the human experience of creative discovery. Art spaces, public art, Cultural Center at the Opera House, potential for HdG HS auditorium and gym – a look forward

Three National Historic Trails, place of national history due to its location, convergence of Bay and roads, rail, and canal systems in tidewater Maryland

Museums – thematic but connected

Understanding our history and how it can contribute to our growth in heritage tourism

Historic fabric – NRHD of — contributing structures, downtown street context intact from its creation in 1782

Cohesive, human-scaled built environment (people-centered)

Build on the historic fabric of the old town waterfront and its unique context

New neighborhoods supporting density for Smart Growth; quality and character

Continue to focus on walkable connections throughout the whole City, specifically related to new neighborhoods as they are designed and constructed

Our goal is to recycle historic neighborhoods and historic houses – build them back up, make them useful and user-friendly (change the language from historic preservation to recycling neighborhoods and homes)

Property maintenance to support this; ways to enforce maintenance – health, safety welfare of all citizens

Green, more sustainable community

Bike-focused, reduce car dependency – perfect location for alternative modes of transportation, reduce vehicle miles traveled

Support Green Team creative initiatives to think differently on how we live on the land – local, more sustainable food production; improve conservation

Continue to develop green infrastructure – specifically as related to water quality through projects that improve runoff from the land and living shorelines

Innovative development practices for newer communities – new urbanist ideals

Trees – Urban canopy

More opportunities for green initiatives – capitalize on them all – solar array extension, green fleet, green building

Fiscally-sound government

Responsible, sound financial practices

Aggressively applying for grants to support priorities; i.e. infrastructure, living shorelines to meet TMDL requirements, new Federal EDA grants

Wise spending, conservative approach to be able to benefit the community that we serve – stretch the money as far as possible for all areas of the community

Maintenance as priority – maintain what we have, incremental growth, natural progression/extension of public utilities

Soundness of public infrastructure, build from within

CIP planning process that projects out years (5 year plus 1 current FY); standard practice for the identified capital projects, specifically related to planned growth but also large infrastructure and restoration projects

Paint a picture

This section of the Comprehensive Plan is where you build in the people aspect – the intrinsic and personal value of living in a small town with creative individuals. Think best practices and bright ideas for renewing communities.

It continues to grow as a center for arts – identify ways to support this and at what scale

Idea of “recycling” historic homes and neighborhoods because of its traditional core development pattern that make it walkable, friendly, and human-scaled – it is what attracts people here to develop infill lots with new homes. Trying to keep the new infill homes in character with nearby housing, in terms of form and massing.

The City’s Vision, Goals, turn them into Actions:

Visions (broad heading)

Goals (headings that support the vision)

Actions (how you’re going to get there)